

PROJECT #2

CLINK Jewellery Collaborative



On 23 September 2015, sometime around 2.30 in the afternoon, a middle-aged woman is disturbed from her shopping in an upmarket mall on Queen Street, Auckland. Mouth agape, she watches as a procession of 20 art students, walking in single file as if connected or linked like a chain, passes by. From the head of the chain comes the sound of an antique piano accordion and a powerful voice that demands attention. Following their leader are a diverse collection of individuals of varying ages, gender and background, all carrying identical clear umbrellas. And what is that, hanging from the inside of each broolly? The shopper's gaze follows them down the street. She reads the white stencilled spraypaint on one of the umbrellas: CLINK PROJECT.

CLINK project is a collaborative endeavour that was established in 2014 by jewellers from Hungry Creek Art and Craft School and the Otago Polytechnic School of Art. In 2014, the CLINK collaborators took their jewellery onto the streets and encouraged the public to participate and engage by either wearing or making their own jewellery. This year, the participants were asked to consider what we hoped to achieve with a popup exhibition on the street. Do we want engagement? Do we want to raise awareness about contemporary jewellery? Do we want to be performative? How do we draw the public in? How can we respond to current exhibition practices such as we had seen in the exhibition *Wunderruma* at the Auckland Art Gallery?



These questions were the driving force behind a three-day frenzy of brainstorming, planning, model-making and arguing. Ideas such as creating a photo booth, or inserting ourselves into *Wunderruma* and hanging the work from poles like a lure on a fishing line, were thrown around. After much debate, we agreed on three priorities: we must act in unison by forming a human chain; this chain must in turn create a 'human gallery;' and we must grab the attention of passers by, so as to draw them in to appreciate our small-scale pieces, using clear plastic umbrellas as moving showcases.

We chose three popup locations in downtown Auckland: the Auckland Art Gallery, Britomart Transport Centre and the Auckland Central Library. Our aim was to respond to, and coincide with, the *Wunderruma* exhibition then showing at the Auckland Art Gallery. *Wunderruma* brought together over 200 pieces of contemporary jewellery from a selection of New Zealand artists. We wanted to respond to current exhibition practices by bridging the gap between fine arts jewellery and the community. Through performance, we channelled the idea of spectacle in an attempt to transform the wearer–collector into a witness–spectator. In a celebration of showmanship, we embarked on a mission to share our jewellery with a more diverse audience – one outside the confines of the 'white cube' space.

Public reaction to our popup shows varied from dropped jaws to furtive glances to conversations with us about our motives – there could be no doubt we caused a scene. Hopefully our disruption of busy shoppers, ambling teenagers, and suspicious businessmen left an impression. And those who were curious, and wanted to know more, will remember the name CLINK project.

The Dunedin jewellers who travelled to Auckland for the performance were Tori Black, Meg Van Hale, Emily Brain, Brogan Nuttall, Tayla Edmunds, Alison Wallace, Ruth Evans, Brendon Monson, Susan Videler, Jennifer Duff and Johanna Zellmer. The jewellers from Auckland were Sarah Beaumont, Robert Fear, James Scott Rawlinson, Margot Symes, Georgia Hopner, Joshua Lindstorm, Lilach Paul, Ildi Juhasz, Hami Bro, Andrea Daly and Shane Hartdegen.

CLINK Jewellery Collaborative is a collaborative initiative between Dunedin School of Art and Hungry Creek Art & Craft School in Auckland.

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